

Applicant believes his amendment addresses and overcomes the rejection as applied to claim 27, and as it might be applied to amended claim 26. First, see the point made just above. Second, please note that in O'Brien, the belt 38 runs around the rollers in a direction opposite to the direction of motion of the articles along the flow path. Thus any moments created in the O'Brien device would be away from the article, in the upward direction (which is presumably why O'Brien has spring arm 45). In claim 26, the belt moves in the same direction as the articles, i.e., opposite to O'Brien. And the moment on body is toward the articles (downwardly), opposite to the motion which is urged on the body in O'Brien. So, O'Brien teaches away, and is not combinable with either of the other references.

The other pending claims ought to be allowed by virtue of their dependency from, and combination with, the novel subject matter of claim 26. Notwithstanding, applicant would repeat his prior arguments, which basically have been mostly dismissed on the grounds of being mere choice. For one example, as to belt rib configuration and claim ^{31, 32 and} 45, the examiner ignores the specification and how the ribs peculiarly flex and thus keep clean. That could hardly be said to be within obvious design choice and is a criticality.

If forced to appeal, applicant's grounds will be based on meaning of the prior art and the law; including that the examiner used hindsight; that Habich and Anderson do not disclose the invention; that there is no problem, teaching or suggestion, for combining Habich or Anderson with O'Brien; and, that even if combined, the result is not the present invention, but a teaching-away.

Reconsideration, entry of the amendments, and allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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I hereby certify that this correspondence was sent by facsimile to at the
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February 11, 2003.

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Application of Roman Golicz et al.
Serial No. 08/962,077 Atty No. 9534

Attachment A - Showing How Claims are Amended - February 11, 2003

26. Article feeding apparatus of the type in which flat articles such as sheets are moved downstream along an article flow path, including a prompter for moving articles along the flow path, wherein the prompter comprises:

a shaft, extending transversely to the flow path;

a first roller, mounted on the shaft;

a body, having a first end and second end lying along the body length; the first end pivotably engaged with the shaft proximate the first roller;

a second roller, mounted at the second end of the body;

a belt, mounted on and endlessly running around the first and second rollers, having a surface which adapted to frictionally engages and moves downstream an articles along the flow path, when the body second end is positioned upstream of the first end;

means for moving the belt around the rollers and thus rotating the rollers; and,

means for imparting to the body a first moment created by a rotary friction force applied directly to the body; wherein the first moment urges the body to rotate around the shaft and thereby press at the second roller end against any article lying along the flow path;

wherein said frictional engagement of the belt with an article moving downstream along the flow path, due to the motion of the belt running around the rollers, imparts to the body a second moment, distinct from the first moment, which urges the body to rotate in the same direction as the first moment.

Application of Roman Golicz et al.

Serial No. 08/962,077

Atty No. 9534

Attachment B - Showing Amended Claim- February 11, 2003

26. Article feeding apparatus of the type in which flat articles such as sheets are moved downstream along an article flow path, including a prompter for moving articles along the flow path, wherein the prompter comprises:

a shaft, extending transversely to the flow path;

a first roller, mounted on the shaft;

a body, having a first end and second end lying along the body length; the first end pivotably engaged with the shaft proximate the first roller;

a second roller, mounted at the second end of the body;

a belt, mounted on and endlessly running around the first and second rollers, having a surface which frictionally engages and moves downstream an article along the flow path, when the body second end is positioned upstream of the first end;

means for moving the belt around the rollers and thus rotating the rollers; and,

means for imparting to the body a first moment created by a rotary friction force applied directly to the body; wherein the first moment urges the body to rotate around the shaft and thereby press at the second roller end against any article lying along the flow path;

wherein said frictional engagement of the belt with an article moving downstream along the flow path, due to the motion of the belt running around the rollers, imparts to the body a second moment, distinct from the first moment, which urges the body to rotate in the same direction as the first moment.

27. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the means for moving the belt comprises a first roller driven by

rotation of the shaft; and, wherein the body first end is bifurcated to straddle the first roller and frictionally engage the rotating shaft, thereby to create said first moment.

28. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the belt is made of elastomer and is stretched between the rollers, so tension in the belt holds the body in frictional and pivotable engagement with the shaft, to thereby create said first moment.

30. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the article flow path lies along a plane; further comprising a shingled stack of sheets lying along said plane; wherein the prompter second roller lies above the stack at an elevation higher than the elevation of the first roller and higher than the elevation of said plane.

31. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the belt has a surface comprised of a plurality of transverse ribs with cross sections which make the ribs substantially deflectable when the belt pulls an article along the flow path.

32. The apparatus of claim 31 wherein each rib in said plurality of ribs has a cross section which is rectangular and has a height to width aspect ratio of between about 1.3:1 and 4:1.

39. The article feeding apparatus of claim 26, further comprising:

two opposing sidewalls, one each on either side of said flow path;

opposing mounting blocks, one each block slidably and detachably mounted on an opposing sidewall;

wherein the shaft is journaled at opposing ends in the mounting blocks; wherein each block is vertically slidable along the respective sidewall, to enable adjustment of the vertical position of each end of the shaft;

resilient means for pressing each mounting block downwardly toward the sidewall; and,

screw adjustment means associated with each mounting block, for causing the mounting block to move vertically in opposition to downward force of said resilient means.

45. The article of claim 31 wherein each rib in said plurality of ribs has a cross section which is triangular and has a height to width aspect ratio of between about 2:1 and 4:1,

rotation of the shaft; and, wherein the body first end is bifurcated to straddle the first roller and frictionally engage the rotating shaft, thereby to create said first moment.

28. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the belt is made of elastomer and is stretched between the rollers, so tension in the belt holds the body in frictional and pivotable engagement with the shaft, to thereby create said first moment.

30. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the article flow path lies along a plane; further comprising a shingled stack of sheets lying along said plane; wherein the prompter second roller lies above the stack at an elevation higher than the elevation of the first roller and higher than the elevation of said plane.

31. The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the belt has a surface comprised of a plurality of transverse ribs with cross sections which make the ribs substantially deflectable when the belt pulls an article along the flow path.

32. The apparatus of claim 31 wherein each rib in said plurality of ribs has a cross section which is rectangular and has a height to width aspect ratio of between about 1.3:1 and 4:1.

39. The article feeding apparatus of claim 26, further comprising:

two opposing sidewalls, one each on either side of said flow path;

opposing mounting blocks, one each block slidably and detachably mounted on an opposing sidewall;

wherein the shaft is journaled at opposing ends in the mounting blocks; wherein each block is vertically slidable along the respective sidewall, to enable adjustment of the vertical position of each end of the shaft;

resilient means for pressing each mounting block downwardly toward the sidewall; and,

screw adjustment means associated with each mounting block, for causing the mounting block to move vertically in opposition to downward force of said resilient means.

45. The article of claim 31 wherein each rib in said plurality of ribs has a cross section which is triangular and has a height to width aspect ratio of between about 2:1 and 4:1,

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Amendment after Final Rejection, 5 pages

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